

MPA MANAGEMENT PLANNING, PART 1

MODULE 1



1.1 OVERVIEW OF MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Purpose and need for management planning
Steps for developing effective management plans

1.2 STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic vs. operational planning
Planning at different scales
Different types of management plans
Example: Florida Aquatic Preserve

1.3 FRONT-END ASSESSMENT

Introduction to assessment
Drivers, baselines, & niches

1.4 SCORE CARD

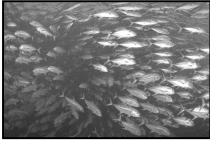
Presentation of Score Card by guest speaker

Acknowledgements

The material in modules 1 and 2 was derived from:

NOAA Coastal Services Center's "MPA Management Planning for Effectiveness" manual and from the "How is Your MPA Doing?" guidebook.

Every participant will also receive a copy of the guidebook.



OVERVIEW

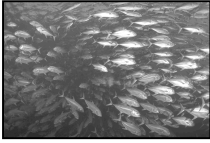
Management planning is a formalized, step-by-step process that can assist MPA managers in identifying their major goals, and the steps and resources needed to achieve those goals.

Modules 1 and 2 are designed to help participants develop skills and facility with the tools and processes of management planning, including strategic planning, planning processes, performance indicators, and effectiveness evaluation. Today's module, module 1, begins with an overview of management planning and strategic planning, and introduces some key tools such as front-end assessment and the SCORE Card approach.

Marine protected areas can only be effectively managed if the managers have a firm, detailed grasp of their overall goals for the MPA, and what exactly is needed to reach those goals. Management planning offers a practical, step-by-step approach to identify the goals, identify the exact steps and resources needed to achieve those goals, put the process in motion, and continually evaluate how well the process is working.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To become familiar with the overall process for management plan development
- ✓ Learn the differences between strategic plans and operational plans, and between network, site, and subject plans
- ✓ Understand what drivers, baselines, and niches are and how they guide the goals and objectives of strategic planning
- ✓ Become familiar with SCORE Card and its utility in management planning



LESSON PLAN

1.1 OVERVIEW OF MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Discussion - Purpose and Need for Effective Management Planning

Group discussion on the purpose and need for effective management planning from the site level to the network level.

Purpose and Need for Effective Management Planning

A management plan is often an important aspect of the success of MPAs, as described in Box 4 (p.6) of the “How Is Your MPA Doing?” guidebook:

“A protected area is one example of a conservation strategy that can be used to manage natural resources. When a decision is made to use a MPA strategy, one of the first steps taken is to design an appropriate management plan for the strategy. A management plan documents an explicit set of goals, outcomes, and activities that will be undertaken over a specified period of time and area, and articulates how the conservation strategy being used is designed to address the threats present. While not all MPAs require a complete management plan to begin operation, eventually a comprehensive plan will be needed to guide the long-term goals and development of the area.”

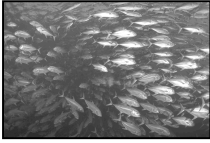
“Poorly designed and/or articulated goals and outcomes can be a serious problem for MPA managers. A set of goals and outcomes that have been appropriately developed and are useful for management purposes (as defined by the criteria used below) will improve the likelihood of the MPA being effectively managed.”

What is a “goal”?

- A broad statement of what the MPA is trying to achieve
- A goal is a qualitative (or non-numeric) outcome that is difficult to measure or quantify, but “you’ll know it when you see it”
- Simple to understand and communicate. Typically phrased as a broad mission statement.
- Written as the present tense some years from now (“Local aquatic habitats will be protected”) or as an unspecified or indefinite endpoint (“To improve the environmental quality of local aquatic habitats”)

What is an “objective”?

- A specific measurable statement of what must be accomplished to achieve a specific goal.
- Usually two or more objectives are involved in attaining one goal.
- Should describe the intended impacts, or results of the program on participants and/or the issue. In other words it should be written in terms of what will be accomplished, not how to do it.
- An effective outcome should be defined within a limited time period, and achievable.



Discussion - “Do You Feel Like You’re Being Effective?”

Group discussion on the following questions:

- *Do you feel like you’re being effective?*
- *What are your goals?*
- *What are your drivers?*
- *How do you monitor progress toward your goals?*

Steps for Developing Effective Management Plans

What makes an effective management plan?

- Supports the organizations goals
- Has the support of stakeholders
- Is realistic to achieve given the amount of resources available
- Has a way to measure progress towards outcomes
- Addresses key environmental, economic, and social issues
- Is concise and easily read by staff, stakeholders, and funders
- Involved stakeholders and interest groups in its development
- Is flexible enough to address changes in understanding or situation

Assessment Phase

This phase provides much of the information used in the current and emerging issues section as well as the background section of the plan.

Step 1. Document all drivers (What tells you why the MPA exists and why it is needed)

- Legislative mandates
- MPA System plans
- Agency and organizational goals
- Stakeholders interest
- Scientific studies/reports

Step 2. Gather baseline information on:

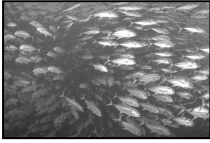
- The condition of the resource,
- The surrounding communities, and
- Current capabilities of the program
- Developmental trends that may impact the resource – demographics

Step 3. Identify:

- Key stakeholders
- Partners
- Competition

Step 4. Analyze the program’s:

- Strengths and weaknesses and
- Opportunities and threats



Strategic Planning Phase

This phase provides much of the information used in the management strategies section of the plan.

Step 5. Develop goals and objectives for site

- Short, Mid, and Long term outcomes
- Biophysical (biologically related), Governance, and Socioeconomic (social and economic related) goals

Step 6. Identify key activities and outputs

- Research
- Monitoring
- Education
- Outreach and community involvement
- Enforcement and compliance
- Visitor Use

Step 7. Identify resources required to implement management strategies

- Staff (numbers and capabilities)
- Facilities
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Funds for contracts
- Community grants

Step 8. Develop evaluation plan for site plan

- Select indicators of success
- Planning the evaluation

Writing and Using the Plan

Step 9. Write the plan using all the elements developed in the first two phases

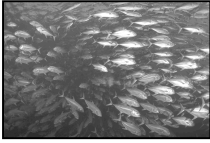
- Keep in mind all audiences
- Summary tables and maps
- Executive summary
- Appendices
- Be clear and concise
- Review with stakeholders

Step 10. Distribute and use plan

- Share plan with key stakeholders
 - Agencies and organizations
 - Funders
 - Partners
 - User groups
 - Staff

Review plan and use for annual planning

Handout 1.1 - Management Plan Development Process Steps



1.2 STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic vs. Operational Planning

Strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future. Strategic planning can be used to determine the mission, vision, values, goals, objectives, roles and responsibilities, timelines, and so on.

In contrast, **operational planning** is an effort to set direction and steps to achieve on-site management actions. Operational planning dictates localized, day-to-day operations (e.g., building a walkway/fence, cleaning up debris, issuing permits, etc.); it details where and how operations will be carried out; and it contains details on site design, scheduling of works, and cost.

What does it mean to be strategic?

It means response preparation. Strategic planning involves preparing the best way to respond to the circumstances of the organization's environment, whether or not its circumstances are known in advance; organizations often must respond to dynamic and even hostile environments. Being strategic, then, means:

- Being clear about the organization's objectives,
- Being aware of the organization's resources, and
- Incorporating both to be responsive to a dynamic environment.

What does it mean to plan?

Planning involves intentionally setting goals (i.e., choosing a desired future) and developing an approach to achieving those goals.

- Setting goals (i.e., choosing a desired future)
- Having an approach to achieve those goals

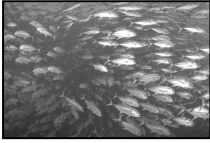
Why do strategic planning?

- It helps an organization do a better job
- It helps an organization focus its energy
- It helps ensure that all members of an organization are working toward the same goals
- It helps the organization adjust its direction in response to a changing environment.

A strategy must be realistic, action oriented, and understood through all spheres of management. A strategy must be more than a cluster of ideas in the minds of a few decision makers. Rather, the concepts must be disseminated and understood by all managers.

Characteristics of strategic planning:

- Strategic planning is the highest order of planning; it attempts to provide a context within which more detailed plans are designed to set and achieve specific objectives as well as the development of government policy.
- Strategic planning attempts to set broad, long-term objectives, and defines the approaches required to achieve them.
- Strategic planning (5-25 years) is an ongoing process because changing environments and needs and perspectives of society can be addressed and provide guidance to



- management through a longer-term framework than operational (1-3 years) planning.
- Like all planning initiatives, stakeholder participation is a fundamental component.
- Strategic plans and resulting action programs can and should incorporate monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the strategy is working and that the management can respond to changes in societal values and expectations.
- Through its long-term and multi-objective framework, strategic planning helps to identify action areas. It can establish priorities for action (e.g., tourism development, water quality monitoring, enforcement/compliance projects), and mechanisms to coordinate these actions.
- Strategic plans can simultaneously focus on time and space while examining a range of competing issues and objectives.

Strategic planning *does not* attempt to give detailed objectives, nor give a step-by-step description of all actions required to achieve the objectives. It is about fundamental decisions and actions, but it does not attempt to make future decisions. Strategic planning involves anticipating the future environment, but the decisions are made in the present. This means that over time, the organization must stay abreast of changes in order to make the best decisions it can at any given point - it must manage, as well as plan, strategically.

Finally, strategic planning, though described as disciplined, does not typically flow smoothly from one step to the next. It is a creative process, and the fresh insight arrived at today might very well alter the decision made yesterday. Inevitably the process moves forward and back several times before arriving at the final set of decisions.

Planning at Different Scales

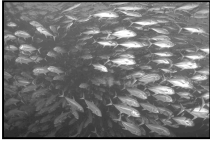
MPA planning can be done at multiple scales. Plans may be written for a single MPA (i.e. site plans), or for a group of sites that are somehow linked (i.e. regional or network plans.) Planning can also be done for a particular aspect of management such as water quality monitoring, marine debris clean-up, or environmental education (i.e. subject plans).

All plans share the same fundamental elements of planning: defining a future direction, and describing steps to achieve that direction. However, plans that operate at different scales are very different from each other, particular in purpose and scope:

- Higher level planning cannot direct all actions at the site level – they can only provide guidance.
- Site level plans tend to become “symptom” oriented if left without higher guidance – applying the local fix approach and never being able to address the root cause. Crisis to crisis.

Higher level plans should encourage the production of similar styles of localized plans. However, there are risks of creating a large number of detailed site plans from a high planning level, while the overall context of the individual plans is easily lost. Each plan can end up trying to create similar outcomes for the site – ignoring site-specific characteristics.

By separating out planning efforts for different scales, managers can keep planning processes manageable, and produce plans that are clear and useful for both managers and for the communities who are interested in MPA management. For example, rather than trying to develop one large plan that includes everything - from how multiple MPAs will be linked, to single-site management activities such as monitoring and putting up signage - managers may want to create separate plans for different scales and topics. However, managers do need to consider how



different plans fit together, making sure that plans for different scales are not in conflict, but rather support each other.

Different Types of Management Plans

Site Plans

Site plans provide detailed management actions directed at specific activities, use, protection, and infrastructure that follow the strategic guidance of the system-wide planning. A site plan is a working document that is updated periodically. Because aspects of its arrangement and complexity must be tailored to the needs of the site, *each site needs its own customized plan*. Upper level planning will often direct **what** needs to be managed, but sites may be responsible for some **prioritization** of issues and **how** the issues will be addressed.

Regional / Network Plans

Regional/network plans span a wide geographic range and can address both how sites are linked as well as management topics that apply to multiple sites. They are generally still strategic in that they provide broad policies and guidelines; however, regional planning has the potential to address specific issues (social, economic, ecological) faced by a region or ecosystem within a region. It is challenging to do regional-level planning that is tangible enough to provide clear guidance to sites but also strategic enough to implement regional or network objectives. Ultimately, they aggregate common site-specific needs and issues to formulate plans that cover a larger geographic region or multiple sites.

Subject Plans

Subject plans are a way to address one or a limited number of issues, such as tourism, water quality, and community involvement. They can direct management action at the network, regional, or site levels. Subject plans may be stand-alone or they may be integrated into site or network plans (e.g. a MPA site or network management plan might have a subject plan on water quality monitoring as an appendix). They often limit the scope of stakeholder involvement to those directly involved in the sector.

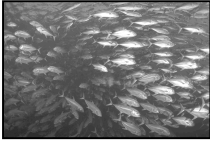
Examples: resource management plans (fisheries management plans, water quality, key ecosystems like mangroves, salt marsh, etc.), industry sector plans (tourism, aquaculture), zoning, etc.

Case Study: Florida Aquatic Preserves

Florida, a state in the U.S.A., has 41 Aquatic Preserves. In 2004 the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the agency that manages the preserves, initiated a strategic planning process. The agency formed a team of managers from approximately 10 of the preserves to lead the strategic planning process, and this group identified long-term goals for the entire system of preserves. This group is now writing a system-wide plan that outlines goals for all 41 of the preserves.

Individual preserve managers are responsible for writing and/or updating site management plans for each of the preserves, and the goals and activities of the sites must fit within the overarching goals of the system-wide plan.

The FDEP also decided to develop subject plans for topics that apply to all of the preserves, such as mapping, natural resource monitoring, and environmental education and outreach. Teams of managers from multiple preserves are working together to develop these subject plans which will provide guidance to all preserves. Dealing with technical topics such as monitoring in separate



subject plans not only can help keep the preserves' site management plans from becoming too large, but also can help standardize data collection and management practices across the preserves. This standardization will make it easier to share data, and to measure the effectiveness of the preserves as a system.

Handout 1.2 - Outlines for Systems and Site Plans

1.3 FRONT-END ASSESSMENT

Introduction to Front-End Assessment

Front end assessment information is often included in site and system plans as rational for management strategies.

Drivers = What and who do you answer to?

- Legislative mandates
- Agency / organization goals
- Priority environmental issues
- Stakeholder interests

Baselines = What is the current state of resources? Of your program? Of the social environment?

- Information about the condition of natural resources in the MPA
- Information about human use in the MPA
- Social assessment of the community that uses and cares about the MPA
- Information about management capacity of your program

Niche = What makes your program / site unique?

- SWOT ANALYSIS: Strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Gap analysis and competition: *Don't* want to duplicate efforts, *Do* want to fill gaps.
- Partnerships and stakeholders

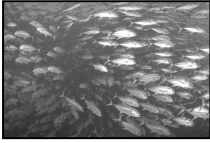
In summary, drivers and niches guide the long-term vision, while baseline information informs strategic planning at both the system and site levels. Baseline information also provides a starting point for monitoring and evaluation.

Handout 1.3: Drivers, Baseline, & Niche Worksheets

Exercise: Drivers, Baselines & Niches

Working in small groups, you will brainstorm about drivers, baseline information that is already available, and niches of your MPA. Discuss your current level of knowledge for each topic versus the desired level of knowledge. Are there things you are aware of but should be monitoring more systematically? Have you thought of new things you need to know about drivers, baseline, and niche (i.e. information gaps)?

At the end of this exercise, you will present your findings to the whole group & discuss.



1.4 SCORE CARD - ASSESSING PROGRESS IN MPA MANAGEMENT

Presenters will discuss Score Card.